

## **HUMAN SERVICES ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

**FEBRUARY 15, 2012**

**PRESENT:** Victoria Nimirowski (WAIM, acting Chair; Jane Blanshard (Disabilities), secretary; Sara Anderson (Advocates for Children); Ron Baker (First Baptist Church), at large; Kevin Grunwald (ex officio); Lorraine Kenowski, at large; Bev Korba (Senior Center); Joan Terry (Commission on Aging).

**ABSENT:** Dexter Eddy (Housing Authority); Ethel Mantzaris (YSB), Chair.

Meeting called to order at 2:04 p.m.

Minutes, corrected, approved.

How to deal with agencies' requests for funds. As Kevin pointed out, we dealt with two such requests at our last meeting. At Joan's suggestion, we agreed to parcel out the requests before us today and get back to Kevin on line in time for the deadline, which is February 29, well before our next meeting. The following agencies were spoken for: Ron, WAIM; Lorraine, United Services; Joan, No Freeze; Bev, Crisis Center; Jane, Legal Services; Sara, WRCC. One task is to assess the number of Mansfield residents using the service. All of the requests are from agencies to which we have donated in the past.

Kevin said that United Services had been using census figures that include UConn and in the past the prison as well. They are asking for a very large increase.

Victoria explained that WAIM is serving many more clients, but their request doesn't reflect all the increases in expenses, such as gas and salaries. They have not given raises.

Kevin provided the town's criteria for funding. Joan pointed out that we can make a phone call to the person who wrote the request if we have questions about it.

Victoria says it is very hard to get money from other towns. Mansfield has been very generous. Kevin says we need to ask what the proportionate shares are, because some of these agencies provide services throughout the region, and it is not realistic to expect one or two towns to fund it all.

Joan says she thinks the reason so many agencies apply to Mansfield is because we make the process much simpler than do some of the smaller towns.

Quarterly report. Victoria asked for figures to compare it with the same period last year. Kevin said that is difficult because some things are seasonal. He does not have

a comparative spread sheet. Victoria said that undoubtedly more is being done this year and it would be good to show that by making the comparison.

Joan said that we need to produce more copies at a time of something like the recent reissue of *At Your Fingertips*.

Senior Center Membership. The number of seniors who join the center has gone up; the number of people using the center is stable. Joan pointed out that younger seniors—baby boomers, for example—are interested in more activities than we are currently offering. Last year's focus group pointed this out, so we offered the Thursday evening programming last summer, and that was well attended. There is very little down time in the center when the rooms are not all in use. Joan suggested that a Friday group might be able to meet in our community room at Glen Ridge.

Goals. Kevin distributed the goals for the human services department. Each department was asked to develop specific goals and objectives. One is emergency training for staff, including Plan A and Plan B in terms of Red Cross involvement.

Kevin has a student intern working on the bench marking and will be able to report on that next time.

Joan pointed out that the reports don't have figures on numbers of people below the poverty line or children without health insurance. Also disability status was not filled in. Jane said there are a number of kids with disabilities in town, but scattered. Kevin said the number of children in poverty is 14%, which is higher than the state average. Some may be children of graduate students. We have a group of children who probably need more services. The school is probably going to do a summer meals program at the middle school, for kids in summer school and at Camp Mansfield. A Food Share van comes a couple of times a month to specific locations, so transportation is a big problem. They look for concentrations of low-income population, such as Hunting Lodge. They only look at income. They felt that the Housing Authority wasn't close enough to clients, though it is on the bus line.

We will continue to focus on priorities at the next meeting. We need to define what our tasks are. An example would be advocating for a bus shelter, wished for by the Commission on Aging. Looking at health issues, health coverage for seniors would be others. Food security needs of people in Mansfield; transportation is always an underlying issue in the town.

Jane asked how the breakfast program works. Do kids get stigmatized as being poor? Apparently, it's been dealt with in Mansfield by providing a snack time when any child can get a snack. But they need an afternoon snack as well.

Meeting adjourned 3:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, Jane Blanshard